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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/686,217	10/15/2003	Markus Keutz	TRW(ASG)6783	5864

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EXAMINER	
ROSENBERG, LAURA B	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3616	

DATE MAILED: 11/02/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

PTO-90C (Rev. 10/03)

Office Action Summary	**Application No.** 10/686,217	**Applicant(s)** KEUTZ ET AL.
	Examiner Laura B. Rosenberg	**Art Unit** 3616

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.
3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-15* is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6)☒ Claim(s) *1-6,8-10,12 and 14* is/are rejected.
7)☒ Claim(s) *7,11,13 and 15* is/are objected to.
8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *15 October 2003* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:
  1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
  3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date *12/19/03; 2/20/04*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 11 and 12 are objected to because of the following informalities:

"said displaceably fastened latching element" should be changed to --said displaceably fastened *second* latching element-- (line 2);

"said latching element" should be changed to --said *second* latching element-- (line 3). Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is unclear what a "frame" shape, as used in the phrase "shaped like a frame" (line 2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-6, 8-10, 12, and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sakane et al. (EP 1167132 A2). In regards to claim 1, Sakane et al. disclose an assembly of a steering wheel base body (including cored #11) and a gas bag module (including #28), the gas bag module detachably latched with the steering wheel base body by latching connections (including #14, 23, 29) comprising a group of first latching elements (for example, including #29) and at least one second latching element (for example, including #23), able to be brought into reversible locking engagement with the first latching elements (can be seen in figures 1, 2), characterized in that, in a latched state of the assembly, the first and second latching elements are able to be moved with respect to each other in an unlocking direction (for example, in direction of arrow in figure 5), and upon movement of the second latching element (wire #23) relative to the first latching elements (pins #29 with hook portions #30) in the unlocking direction, all latching connections are released simultaneously in a non-destructive manner (column 16).

In regards to claim 2, Sakane et al. disclose the first latching elements being formed by several latching hooks (including hook portions #30) and the second latching element being formed by at least one elongated shaped part (including wire #23 and plates #11, 14) into which the latching hooks can engage (can be seen in figures 1, 2).

In regards to claim 3, Sakane et al. disclose the shaped part being a curved wire (for example, including #23).

In regards to claims 4-6, Sakane et al. disclose the shaped part being a rigid plate (for example, including #11 or #14), which is a sheet metal punched part (for example, including#11), and is "shaped like a frame" (for example, including #11 or #14).

In regards to claim 8, Sakane et al. disclose an access (for example, near #24) being provided on the steering wheel base body, which is able to be reached from the exterior and allows transmission of force in the unlocking direction to the latching element that is provided for releasing all of the latching connections (column 16).

In regards to claim 9, Sakane et al. disclose the group of first latching elements (including #29) being displaceably fastened to one of the gas bag module and the steering wheel base body (can be seen in figure 1).

In regards to claim 10, Sakane et al. disclose the at least one second latching element (including #23) being displaceably fastened to one of the gas bag module and the steering wheel base body (can be seen in figure 1).

In regards to claim 12, Sakane et al. disclose at least one stop (for example, including #21), against which the second latching element lies in its locking position.

In regards to claim 14, Sakane et al. disclose the movement for releasing the latching elements being a purely translatory movement (can be seen in figures 3, 5).

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 7, 11, 13, and 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

7. The examiner notes that it appears that the embodiment shown in figures 4-10 is drawn to an allowable combination of features.

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Landis et al. and Sauer et al. each disclose an assembly of a steering wheel base body and a gas bag module, the gas bag module detachably latched with the steering wheel base body by latching connections comprising a group of first latching elements and at least one second latching element able to be brought into reversible locking engagement with the first latching elements, characterized in that, in a latched state of the assembly, the first and second latching elements are able to be moved with respect to each other in an unlocking direction, and upon movement of the second latching element relative to the first latching elements in the unlocking direction, each latching connection is released in a non-destructive manner, the first latching elements being hooks and the second latching element being a plate, and the assembly including a horn mechanism and access for detachment via the use of a tool.

Worrell et al. ('037), Niederman et al., Hodac et al., Worrell et al. ('223), Schenck, Kurz et al., and Albers et al. each disclose an assembly of a steering wheel base body and a gas bag module, the gas bag module detachably latched with the steering wheel base body by latching connections comprising a group of first latching elements and at least one second latching element able to be brought into reversible locking engagement with the first latching elements, characterized in that, in a latched state of the assembly, the first and second latching elements are able to be moved with respect to each other in an unlocking direction, and upon movement of the second latching element relative to the first latching elements in the unlocking direction, each latching connection is released in a non-destructive manner, the first latching elements being hooks and the second latching element being a wire and plate combination, and the assembly including a horn mechanism and access for detachment via the use of a tool.

Ikeda et al. disclose an assembly of a steering wheel base body and a gas bag module, the gas bag module detachably latched with the steering wheel base body by latching connections comprising a group of first latching elements and at least one second latching element able to be brought into reversible locking engagement with the first latching elements, characterized in that, in a latched state of the assembly, the first and second latching elements are able to be moved with respect to each other in an unlocking direction, and upon movement of the second latching element relative to the first latching elements in the unlocking direction, each latching connection is released in a non-destructive manner, the first latching elements being hooks and the second latching element being a plate and locking latch combination, and the assembly including a horn mechanism and access for detachment via a locking latch lever.

Schutz discloses an assembly of a steering wheel base body and a gas bag module, the gas bag module latched with the steering wheel base body by latching connections comprising a group of first latching elements and at least one second latching element able to be brought into reversible locking engagement with the first latching elements, the first latching elements being hooks and the second latching element being a plate and wire combination, and the assembly including a horn mechanism.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Laura B. Rosenberg whose telephone number is (571) 272-6674. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:00am-3:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on (571) 272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Laura B. Rosenberg

Laura B Rosenberg
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3616

LBR

10/27/05

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